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LITERATURE.

THE FIRST GERMAN CONGRESS FOR EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY was held at the little town of Giessen from the 18th to the 21st of April. Its numerous attendance was derived from very varied professions; psychologists, philosophers, psychiatrists, physicians, surgeons, philologists, teachers and clergymen, all seemed to find in the present topic one common meeting ground. Although the Congress was national and proceedings were confined to the German tongue, nevertheless representatives were to be seen and heard, not only from Austria and Switzerland, but also from France, England, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Russia, and even from the more remote United States, Canada, Egypt and Japan.

An agreeable feature of the meeting was its remarkably business-like character. The spiritualism and other "occult" phenomena in evidence at the previous international Congresses had disappeared from the programme; contention as to the primary method of psychological research had given way to a frictionless co-operation from all sources; visionary speculations had been wholly replaced by simple exposition of observed facts and explanatory theories. This satisfactory tone must be credited in large measure to the energetic steps of the managing committee, who had restricted discussion to experimental work and membership to such persons as had already published researches of scientific value.

The great wealth of subject-matter precludes attempt in our limited space at any systematic description; we must content ourselves with brief indication of a few salient features. As usual, the largest share of attention fell to the sensory functions, these obviously constituting the region most readily accessible to experimental treatment. A long and important paper was read by G. E. Müller on color-vision, advocating Hering's theory but in a modified and much more elaborate form; the processes in the retina itself were fundamentally opposed to those in the adjoining afferent nervous apparatus. Ebbinghaus discussed some familiar visual illusions, stating that he had found their exact counterpart in the sense of touch also, so that they could not be due to peculiarities in any of the peripheral organs or in the subcortical co-ordination of movements, but must arise from purely intellectual adaptation (*Einstellung*). Another favorite topic was Memory; in this sphere, we were introduced to a new mathematical prodigy, Dr. Rükle, who, among many other feats, far surpassed all previous record by memorizing in thirteen minutes a series of no less than 204 figures. Miss Gordon (United States) produced some experimental evidence to the effect that—contrary to the usual opinion—neither pleasant nor unpleasant impressions are remembered any better than indifferent ones. Claparède propounded a new theory of sleep; it was no longer to be regarded as a mere cessation of function in consequence of exhaustion, poison, etc., but rather as a positive reflex occurring instinctively in order to obviate such exhaustion. Weygandt had demonstrated upon himself the practically interesting fact, that a short sleep will perfectly renew capacity for easy intellectual performances, whereas much longer repose is indispensable to restore

functions which demand greater effort of attention. Henri related his experiences in conjunction with Binet as regards "individuality;" he enumerated the various brief mental tests which they had employed for this purpose; all, however, had proved unsatisfactory, and now they could only recommend long systematic investigation of each subject. The present writer sketched out some general improvements in the method of calculating psychical correlations. Külpe read a valuable paper on Abstraction, showing experimentally its paramount rôle in all apperceptive mentation. The youthful experimental science of Testimony (Aussage) was represented by Stern and Fräulein Borst, who dealt particularly with the different reminiscent accuracy of things heard as compared to things seen, of written testimony as compared to oral, and with the comparative reliability of men, women and children; above all, they pointed out the need that children should be taught to testify. Other papers were read—many of them very important—by Schumann, Guttman, Tschermak, Benussi, Stern, Struyken, Alrutz, Heymans, Wreschner, Ranschburg, R. Müller Elsenhans, Ach, Martius, Ettlinger, Groos, Siebeck, Marbe, Ament, Lay, Exner and Watt. Several who had promised contributions, including Stumpf, Meumann, and Ziehen, had unfortunately been prevented from attending.

The other and at least equally interesting part of the proceedings consisted in an exhibition of apparatus. Martius showed an arrangement for transmitting light rays in exactly measurable quantity and duration. Three new tachistoscopes were presented, each with a special advantage; that of Erdmann and Dodge brought the whole field to view with perfect simultaneousness; in Schumann's, the object to be seen was immediately followed by a bright light, which destroyed the after-image and thus secured real momentariness of vision; while Wirth's mirror permitted instantaneous change of any desired portion of the regarded card (or other optical stimulus). Wirth, Ranschburg and Alber exhibited instruments for exposing a number of syllables, figures, colors, etc. in continuous succession, as a test of perception or memory. Zeiss showed a new stereoscope with micrometer. Stern's Tonevariator proved able to demonstrate beats, difference-tones, etc., with unusual distinctness. Spearman's monochord admitted adjustment down to 1/10 v. d.; his æsthesiometer, having a third point at 45° to the normal pair, rendered it possible to apply single stimuli to any surface *perpendicularly* Struycken had constructed a valuable instrument for measuring auditory acuteness in micro-millimeters. Sommer demonstrated a variety of ingenious clinical inventions: one of them, on being attached to the patient's pulse, translated the beats into musical tones whose rhythm varied characteristically with every psychic disturbance; another graphically registered the smallest movement of arm or leg in any direction, and curves thus obtained from patients with dementia præcox, alcoholism, etc., presented in each case readily distinguishable symptoms. Many other useful apparatus, photographs, statistical table, and reports were laid out for inspection.

The proceedings closed by founding a permanent national Psychological Society.

C. SPEARMAN.

L'Année psychologique, publié par A. Binet avec la collaboration de H. BEAUNIS, V. HENRI et TH. RIBOT, Vol. X. Paris, Masson et Cie. 1904, Price 15 f.

This volume contains among the other original articles by Prof. Binet: the first, the leading article of the volume, "*La création littéraire*," a psychological portrait of M. Paul Hervieu; a Summary of